



February 22, 2017

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, I would like to offer testimony in support of the Department of Transportation Rail Operations funding within HB 7027, *THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019*.

It is our understanding, through a presentation made by members of the Administration and staff from the Department of Transportation at our most recent Council meeting, that the FY 18 and FY 19 levels of \$173,370,701 (T592) and \$198,225,900 (T1420) respectively, would support the current level of rail operations. Additionally, this funding will allow for expansion of the Hartford Line in 2018 while allowing the Department of Transportation to operate the rail lines without a fare increase.

We support this budget based upon our desire to advocate for the rail commuters we serve. The Council had recently authored a resolution that called for “No Fare Increases and No Cuts to Service” and this would meet that charge.

As you may know, the rail passengers and commuters of the State of Connecticut have just had their rates raised 5% (in addition to the annual 1% M8 purchase tax which was part of a 7 year annual increase) in response to a 37 million dollar cut that the legislature instituted on the Department of Transportation in this current year. In addition, the rail commuters of the State of Connecticut recently experienced the reduction in service from the closing of 3 more ticket booths (Greenwich, South Norwalk and Bridgeport).

As it stands, the rail commuters on the Main Line in the State of Connecticut already pay the highest percentage of fares in the country for their train ride. As such we feel it is unfair to raise fares or reduce service any further on the rail commuters within the State of Connecticut.

Vibrant and adequately funded rail lines are vital to the economic growth of Connecticut towns and cities in nearly all regions of our state. The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council respectfully calls upon the Connecticut State Legislature to adequately support the rail transportation needs of the State of Connecticut by voting to fund the rail operations at levels in HB 7027.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Gildea".

Jim Gildea  
Chairman, Connecticut Commuter Rail Council  
[ctcommuterrailcouncil.org](http://ctcommuterrailcouncil.org)